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ABSTRACT

Designed to give special education teachers ideas and techniques for working effectively with parents of elementary school students, the document presents guidelines for parent-teacher interaction. Sections cover the following topics: techniques for parent involvement, building rapport, informal parent-teacher contacts, parent-teacher conferences, working with the problem parent, and activities for parents (such as parent workshops). Included is a parent bibliography of approximately 40 books, pamphlets, and other resources. (IM)

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WORKING WITH PARENTS

DEVELOPED BY

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

THIS INFORMATION PACKET IS DESIGNED TO GIVE TEACHERS IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH PARENTS.

INCLUDED ARE ALTERNATIVES TO THE MORE TRADITIONAL METHODS OF RELATING TO PARENTS, ALONG WITH GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE PARENT-TEACHER INTERACTION DURING CONFERENCES.

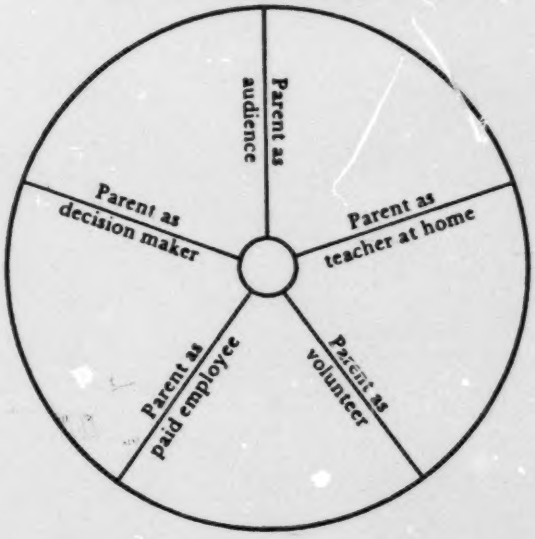
THE PACKET ALSO PROVIDES SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS TO SHARE WITH PARENTS.

THIS INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN HAS BEEN COLLECTED OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES: ARTICLES AND IDEAS SUBMITTED BY SPECIAL EDUCATORS WHICH THEY THEMSELVES ORGINATED OR FOUND USEFUL.....CLIPPED FROM VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS, HANDOUTS, FROM UNIVERSITY COURSES AND CONSULTANTS, ETC.

WE REGRET THAT, DUE TO THE MEANS BY WHICH THESE IDEAS WERE COLLECTED, THE ORIGINAL AUTHORS ARE NOT ALWAYS CREDITED AS THIS INFORMATION WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO US.

FLRS/CROWN
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
SUMMER, 1975

ASPECTS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT



The Parent Involvement Model

PARENTS NEEDS VARY

The goals of parent involvement will be almost as varied as the number of parents in the program. Some parents will need to be involved because they need to learn new ways to teach their child in the intellectual or cognitive areas. Other parents will need to learn how to foster their child's social and emotional development. Other parents may need the emotional support derived from the teacher and other parents of handicapped children; still others may need to gain information as to where to seek answers to or help with problems such as legal rights of the handicapped, technical schools for training the handicapped, tax deductions specific to the handicapped.

The success of a parental involvement program is contingent upon:

The attitude of the professional--there must be a positive attitude which connotes that parents have a contribution to make to the growth of their child.

The recognition that there is more than one way to involve parents--parents have individual needs that must be recognized to help them select the best way to involve themselves in the educational program of their child at a given time.

The belief that each parent is capable of growth--the amount of growth of parents will vary. The extent to which a parent progresses is dependent upon the degree to which the teacher changes, expands and increases the breadth and depth of activities in the parent involvement program.

Parents are and should be thought of as an integral and important part of the education team.
- Contacts should begin early in the child's school career so that parents are accepted and feel that they are a natural part of the educational process.

Establish positive communication with parents by
- home visitations
- telephone calls
- initially positive comments about the child's progress

Parents are more likely to be receptive to any pleasant news that you may need to report.

TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

One of the goals of the teacher is to maximize the value of group meetings for those who are ready to attend. It has been found that the most successful meetings are characterized by:

- Parent involvement in the selection of topics, speakers, and date and hour of meeting.
- Meetings scheduled no more often than once a month.
- Notification of the meeting through the use of several media (written flyers or notes, telephone calls through a parent network, newspaper notices, radio announcements).
- Timing. There should be an initial notice at least once a month in advance and followup reminders 4 to 7 days prior to the meeting.
- Dynamic speakers and use of visual aids.
- Arrangements for babysitting at the site of the meeting.
- Car pools or other transportation arrangements.
- Involving parents in committee work to support the group.
- A friendly, but not imposing, atmosphere--increases likelihood of parents returning to future meetings.
- Avoidance of the solicitation of funds at the meeting.

Following the group meeting, the teacher should record the names of those in attendance and any pertinent observations or remarks made by parents that can enable the teacher to gain more insight into the needs of individual parents. Following the above, the teacher should become better able to guide the parents into activities that match their individual needs. The teacher should not assume that the parents who were not at the meeting were disinterested in their child and unwilling to become involved with the school. Rather, she should begin to gather information from all available sources that will help her plan to reach nonattending parents through a new or different approach.

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS GET TO SPECIFICS

The next approach the teacher might use is small group meetings in which an attempt is made to bring together four to seven parents who have similar needs, e.g., parents whose children are retarded in language. Typically such groups are held either at school or in the home of a parent or the teacher at a time that is most covenient for all concerned.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND CONCERNS IMPORTANT * * * *

Some of the caracteristics that enhance the success and assure the attendance at small group meetings are:

*Frequent meetings, usually as often as once weekly.

*Related or interrelated topics chosen by the parents.

*Responsibilities rotated for planning and conducting meetings.

*Articles, books, and cassette tapes, reviewed during the week.

*Careful attention given to the individual needs of the group--social, emotional and intellectual.

*Content of the meeting challenging, yet on a level where comprehension and assimilation are possible for all participants.

*Social amenities such as dress and language compatible with the group needs.

*A relaxed but goal oriented atmosphere.

*Teacher participation but not in dominant or condescending manner. A first name basis for interacting may be appropriate for one locale and inappropriate for another.

*Small group setting which may offer an opportunity to plan ways of helping new parents or reluctant participants to become involved in activities suited to their needs. Focusing the group on this kind of problem enhances its cohesiveness.

*Meetings held for definite, predetermined periods of time, usually not exceeding two hours.

*A teacher who is alert to the growth and development of the group members so that an individual who progresses to the point where he has outgrown one group can be encouraged to shift to a more appropriate group.

*Group goals geared to meet the individual needs of members of the group.

*A teacher who is sensitive to the need for changes and provides necessary support and guidance. The teacher should view such changes as growth.

Information on pertinent materials emerging during the meeting should be recorded by the teacher following the meeting.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ALTERNATE WAYS TO INVOLVE PARENTS

time

Before school
During school
Just after school
Evening
Weekends
Sunday afternoon or evening

place

Classroom
School conference room
School cafeteria
School auditorium
Comminity School in area where parents live
Teacher's home
A parent's home
Park
Playground
Movie theater
Bowling alley
Skating ring
etc.

activity

Telephone calls
Notes
Parent conferences
Parent group meetings
Classroom observations
Lunch with child at school
Newsletter from child's class
Field trip
Class party
Parent workshop for constructing games and activities to be used at home
Parent project to build or repair something for the school
Theatre party
Skating party
Bowling party
Talent show

BUILDING RAPPORT

MAKING PARENTS FEEL WELCOME

1. Invite them to the school for tours.
2. Send them a flyer or letter about school events.
3. Hold parent parties occasionally.
4. Make provision for parent meeting rooms.
5. Create parent socials with themes of interest.
6. Ask parents to serve as recruiters to involve non-participating parents.

TO PROVIDE OUTLETS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Create a round-table discussion with parents concerning phases of child training with someone in the medical, psychological, or teaching field as moderator.
2. Have a turnabout day when parents "take over" classes with the teacher as observer; let the parents express their opinions at this time.
3. Create problem clinics with the teacher-nurse, psychologist, or adjustment teacher as the presider in which parents can raise questions about their children.
4. Invite speakers and lecturers to come and give talks and ask parents to fill out cards with questions for the speakers.
5. Send them invitations to come to a school "Answer Day" in which members of the staff will answer their questions.

UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES

Recognize hostility, fear, indifference, or apathy as enemies to the child and his development. Instill positive attitudes in the parents by showing interest in their needs and trying to fullfill them.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Always discuss a given parents' cultural background in positive terms. When activities are planned, these are most effective when they are based upon the parent's familiar culture. For example, Pinata parties with Mexican themes may be used; international themes for street bazaars involve many parents of many backgrounds; foods, decor, planning can all revolve around the particular culture of the parents. In this manner, the teacher reinforces pride in the culture and gains the cooperation of the parent. The parent is at ease because he is not thrust into a totally new situation; instead, he can better identify with the goals of the endeavor, if those goals are translated to him within his own frame of reference.

ACCEPTING PARENTS AS THEY ARE

Parents stand in awe of the teacher and the school; this creates distance rather than rapport. Teachers should strive to break down barriers. One of the best ways is to let parents know that to be good parents they need not be perfect--they simply can be themselves and attempt to learn the better ways to do things for their child, working together with teacher and school personnel. Remember that parents are human beings with human feelings; let them see that you accept them for what they are and for where they are in their own development. Then proceed from there.

PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

Set up a chain reaction of learning, parent to parent. Choose leaders, or let other parents choose their own leaders, and pass along, through activities and discussion, the lessons you want taught that will ultimately help the child. A contemporary of the parent with similar problems can often "get through" when the teacher cannot, because the parent feels identity with another adult he knows has problems similar to his own.

LETTER TO PARENTS.....

Dear (Parent's name),

Mr(s). _____(principal) and I are please to have your child enrolled at _____(school) for the _____ school yea.

We are here to help in every way possible. It is important that we put the next ten months to the best possible use. The achieve this goal, parents and teachers must work together from the beginning of the school year.

I am ready to meet with parents at any time or place that is convenient for you. Please notify me before August 26 of when you would like to plan a meeting. The school phone number is _____.

Our curriculum includes the following basic skills:
1. Practical mathematics, English, Reading and Spelling.
2. Health and safety at home, work, play, school and in the community.
3. Family economics and work experience. We help your child with social adjustment and encourage good work attitudes.

We want to provide your child with on-the-job experience as either a kitchen, custodial or administrative helper. This will be good training for job placement.

We encourage our students to participate in our bank savings program, Special Olympics, and fishing trips. We base this encouragement on the following reasons:
1. Bank savings program-Students can learn how to save money. They also get to practice the arithmetic skills that they will use in everyday life.

2. Special Olympics-Most students who participate in the local meet will be permitted to go to the state meet. A trip to the state Special Olympic provides an invaluable learning experience for both parents and students at little cose.

3. Fishing trips-Teachers occasionally take students on fishing trips on Saturdays. These trips allow the students to enjoy themselves with proper supervision.

If you have any questions about our program, we will be very happy to answer them when we meet at school or at your home.

Sincerely,

(Your name)
Teacher

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PARENT-TEACHER CHECKLIST

.....SOME LEADING QUESTIONS.....

- Do you know the parent-interests?
- Do you listen well when he talks and comment on his words?
- Do you use his name when you talk with him?
- Do you ask questions in a friendly soft-spoken way?
- Do you praise his contributions to the program? How?
- Do you urge parents to work together with children in varied activities?
- Do you plan things for parents to do at home with children?
- Do you urge parents to read with children?
- Do you know about the neighborhood in which the parents live?
- Do you show the parent you respect him?
- Do you collect "parent ideas" and communicate them to other parents?
- Do you set up simple rules for parents to observe and follow through to make certain they follow them?
- Do you involve parents in activities of the school?
- Do you employ special parent-talents in the program where useful?
- Do you criticize in a harsh, stern manner?
- Do you invite parents to attend socials, films, lectures, discussions, and class tours?

- Do you know which parents belong to community groups?
- Do you know who the leaders are? Have you used them to recruit?
- Do you know the three major interests of most parents concerning their child --their home, their neighborhood?
- Do you have a parents' newsletter? Perhaps one of the parents could write and produce a newsletter in simple form.
- Do you draw parents out about their own cultural interests, background customs?
- Do you communicate to the parent that he should be proud of his culture?
- Do you have him talk about his job, his hobby, his friends-giving him the dignity of selfhood in your eyes?
- Do you invite individual parents to observe and comment during school activities?
- Do you share with the parent the victories as well as the defeats he has with his child?
- Do you visit the parent's home whether invited to do so or not?
- Do you create opportunities for parents to excel?
- Do you know what their personal goals are?
- Do you make a parent's experience with students memorable and personal to him by giving him something concrete to do, about which he can talk to others?

PERHAPS BY REVIEWING SOME OF THE QUESTIONS ON THE PAGE BEFORE, AND ABOVE TEACHERS WILL BE ABLE TO DEVISE ANSWERS THAT THEY CAN EMPLOY TO ACHIEVE CLOSER RAPPORT AND THUS HELP THE CHILD. IF SOME QUESTIONS ARE STRANGE TO YOU, THAT IS A GOOD STARTING POINT. PERHAPS THAT IS THE POINT OF EMPHASIS FOR YOUR SITUATION. WHILE NO TEACHER CAN ACCOMPLISH ALL OF THESE AIMS, THEY ARE GOOD AIMS TO PROJECT AND OUT OF THEM WILL COME GOOD IDEAS

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Help Wanted?

Ever go home from a round of parent conferences feeling frustrated? Billy's mom had to leave just as you both were "getting down to business" about Billy's behavior. Mary's parents seemed nervous even though you tried to reassure them there was no need to worry about her. Parent conferences have their value, of course. But often parent-teacher relationships that are established more informally are more meaningful. Opportunities for contacting parents arise every day - make use of them and you'll do much to reinforce the bond that should exist between home and school. Let's look at a few ways to stengthen that bond.

- When the child has learned something new or has shown improved behavior, send home a note. Let the child dictate it.

  Dear Mom,

  Today I put away my blocks and I didn't even throw a single one around. Pretty good, huh?

  Love, Lester

  This note only takes a minute of your time and it may well serve as the turning point in Lester's feeling about school.

- In an entrance or dismissal area, place a "Parents, Please Read" bulletin board to stimulate conversation. Post such items as health tips, an announcement of a coming TV program for children, cartoons about kids, a child's unforgettable "Comment of the Week", and photos from a recent field trip.

- Want help carting scraps from the lumberyard for woodworking projects? Need adult chefs for the kindergarten cookout? Could you use a volunteer storyreader? Some of your parents would no doubt love to pitch in--send home child-designed "Help Wanted" notices describing what the job entails and how much time is involved.

- "Publish" a two or three page mimeographed newsletter to keep parents posted about what's going on. Include a variety of information--explanations of school policies, room news, (parents will want to know about those new gerbils), tips for at-home help in reinforcing newly learned concepts, games parents can play with kids, and so on. You might include a telephone number for a "reach-the teacher" line for parents who'd like to talk with you.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

CHECKLIST FOR A GOOD CONFERENCE

In beginning the conferring process, the teacher must be able to grasp clearly and completely, what a person is trying to say. Furthermore, he must be able to communicate this understanding to the person involved.

A few suggestions at this point which may be helpful to those who are striving to improve their communicating skills.

*Treat all expressed feelings as real

*Show him that it is not foolish to feel upset, jealous or anxious

*Avoid emotionally loaded words

*Avoid an emotional defense of school policy - or for that matter, your way of doing things. Correct any motion that you or your superiors have it in for him or his child

*Build his adequacy and confidence in himself

The basic attitudes necessary for having a successful conference are those of acceptance and understanding. The basic skills of the teacher are those of gut level communication. Consider the following checklist for a good teacher/parent conference:

* Make careful preparation.
* Insure privacy.
* Have an informal setting.
* Set a time limit.
* Establish rapport.
* Begin on a positive note.
* Encourage the parents to talk.
* Listen attentively.
* Develop an attitude of mutual cooperation.
* Delay making numerous definite suggestions yourself.
* Encourage suggestions from the parent.
* Use parents' practical suggestions as a springboard for action.
* Summarize points covered.
* Make plans together for future progress.
* End on a note of continuing cooperation.
* Make notes after parents leave, when possible.
* Be informed about school purposes, methods, and achievements.

*PLANNING

Plan the interview. The teacher should prepare himself for a conference session by reviewing what he already knows about the progress of this person's child. What are the child's apparent strengths and weaknesses? In what ways has he failed to improve? What direction should be taken to meet the child's needs and prepare him for more responsibility? These are the types of questions a teacher should think about in order to clarify his goals for a conference session.

*RELAX!

The first thing to be established in the conference interview is a working relationship. Invite the parent(s) into a relaxed atmosphere. The atmosphere should be free of false airs conducive of leveling, and pervaded by a genuine hospitality that permits both teacher and parent to be himself. These attributes can prevail only when one is free from interruptions and assured privacy.

*STRUCTURE

A simple, frank explanation of the purpose of this session and the role of each participant provides the minimum structure for a conference interview. Information at this point should avoid trying to cover too much at any one time. Remember, the primary objective is to come to understand how a person sees himself in his present situation, how he views his child, and how he feels about his child's progress (or lack of).

*LISTEN

Whatever a parent gains from a conference is determined in large part, by the teacher's ability to listen.

* CONTROL

While the teacher must listen carefully, he also must control the interview. Control is easiest when the number of ideas discussed in a simple session is kept to a minimum.

* ENDING THE INTERVIEW

The skilled teacher sets definite time limits and sticks to them. It is wise in taking leave to ask the parent to summarize what he feels has happened as a result of the talk (for other parents, the teacher may have to do this). This summary should provide a review of points of agreement, areas where perceptions differed, and what each of you will try to do before the next meeting. The teacher should, when alone, evaluate the success of the interview. How did the parent seem to react to the experience? How could it have been better?

* EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

When a teacher attempts to counsel a parent, what are his aims? What can he expect? He can expect greater understanding between himself and the parent. He can also expect the parent to grow in willingness to accept responsibility for his child's growth and development, and, this is a touchy one, he may find a more realistic acceptance by the parent of his own strengths and limitations. The teacher may also observe an increase in the parents cooperation.

The teacher cannot expect through conferring to make radical changes in a person, nor can he expect to solve all of his parent/teacher/pupil problems in person to person relationships. The conference interview has many facets, but is neither a cure-all nor a magic tranquilizer. A most important aspect of the process called conferring is an attitude of respect and cooperation. that a teacher can demonstrate to the parent. Upon such an attitude great things can be built in almost any relationship.

WORKING WITH PROBLEM PARENTS

THE TIMID PARENT

Usually has a very high regard for teachers and is speechless before you. Considers education a one-way street and feels he's going the wrong way. Nothing sparks a reply.

1. Offer several sincere compliments.
2. Ask questions which can't be answered with a yes or no.
3. Be as friendly as possible without overdoing it.

THE WORRIED PARENT

Usually worried about a lot more than just his child. Figures no matter what you said in your invitation, his youngster must be in some kind of trouble. Can be recognized by handkerchief twisting, finger drumming, or too casual hat twirling.

1. If worry is expressed, recognize it and respect it.
2. If the child is doing satisfactorily, assure the parent of this immediately.
3. Assure the parent that few problems in child adjustment or learning are insoluable.
4. Plan a joint attack on the problem. This step usually relieves a worried parent's mind.

THE EGOTISTICAL PARENT

Will probably come in smiling, self-confident. He's probably clever.

1. Don't deflate the balloon or you will have a life-long enemy. Remember, ego is a most precious possession.
2. Acknowledge his abilities.
3. Use the parent's abilities to the advantage of the child and possibly (as a resource person) the entire class.

THE CRITICAL PARENT

Comes in armed with "expert" opinions on how to teach children. Wants his own child to have the three "R's" and nothing else. Has read all about this "progressive" education and wants none of it.

1. Don't argue, but try to inform by using both facts and an appeal to the emotions.
2. Talk about only those areas in which you are well equipped to speak.
3. Admit educators don't have all the answers. What profession does?

ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS

PASSPORT TO POSITIVE PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

The "passport" is a medium for communication among parents, special teachers, regular teachers and teacher's aides concerned with the child. The passport is an ordinary spiral notebook which the child carries with him daily. The child carries his personal passport to and from home, and to and from his regular classes and the learning center.

PROCEDURES

Explain the passport to the child. Tell him he will receive points toward desired rewards if he carries his passport and that points cannot be earned for any activities if the passport is forgotten or misplaced.

Introduce parents to the passport concept at an evening meeting with the teachers. Discuss the guidelines with the parents, from their point of view, before the program is implemented.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING

The following guidelines should be applied when writing notes in the passport.

1. Be brief. (Parents are busy, too.)
2. Be positive. (Parents know their child has problems. They don't need to be reinforced.)
3. Be honest. (Don't say a child is doing fine if he is not. However, rather than writing negative notes, write neutral ones or request a parent visit.)
4. Be responsive. (If a parent asks for help, respond immediately)
5. Be informal. (You are a professional but parents are still your equal.)
6. Be consistent. (If you use the passport, do so consistently and expect the same from the parent.)
7. Avoid jargon. (Parents don't understand educators' jargon. For that matter, do we?)
8. Be careful. (If you are having a bad day, personally, do not project your feelings onto the child or his parents.)

MATERIALS

The following materials may be used to make the passport.

1. One 29¢ spiral notebook, 8½ x 11 inches.
2. The child's picture, his favorite picture, or a design affixed to the front cover of the notebook.
3. A point or check sheet affixed inside the back cover of the notebook.

WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS

- Parent workshops can help banish the complaint that "Kids don't learn anything in kindergarten, they just play." Let two teachers talk informally with parents as they work with materials children use at school. Parents may grit their teeth over the impossible train puzzle and sigh over Tinker Toy projects, but soon they realize the challenges their children meet and how much encouragement they need. Help them see that such toys help children develop small and large muscle coordination, visual discrimination, and so on.

- During a reading-readiness workshop a whole new world can be opened for parents who aren't aware of the value of reading to and talking with children at home. Discuss how to use descriptive phrases to expand vocabulary ("Bring your blue wool jacket with the sailor collar," instead of "Get your coat"), how to capitalize on daily excursions, how to develop language skills through rhymes and riddles.

- An art workshop provides parents with the opportunity to don smocks and experiment with various media. After they finally make the plunge, they'll joke about their initial awkwardness. This experience will help them to recognize the developmental stages through which children pass.

Careful planning is required to make any parent workshop run smoothly. Pick an appropriate time and site. If possible, provide baby-sitting for mothers who must bring young ones along. Consider an evening workshop to draw working parents.

The insights gained and the strengthened parent-teacher relationships that develop are important, yet secondary results. The most significant outcome is a happy child who is encouraged and helped to learn both at school and at home.

BARBARA MASRY is a prekindergarten teacher at P.S. 138, Brooklyn,N.Y.

ABC'S TO BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Aids to Management of the Slow Child At Home

By

Marybeth P. Frey

PREFACE

Every handicapped child comes equipped with a set of parents. Any professional service for the child, whether public or private, group or individual, comes in contact with these parents. At this point the service can do one of three things: ignore the parents, give token service by telling the parents how their child is doing, or we can use the parents as valid observers who are capable of learning.

If we can accept the premise that the parent is a learner, then the professional worker needs to use every possible means of reaching the parent at his level of processing and learning. Supportive props may be needed for use from time to time to reinforce the learning. The ABC's for parents could be used in this way.

These ABC's are not in any sequence of importance nor will every parent reach all these goals. They should be used as the needs and learning level of the parent indicate. Each item has inherent in it enough material for the parent to discuss and clarify for many sessions, but not every item will be comprehended, ingested, and utilized by every parent. Therefore, the ABC's could be used in part or in entirety on the parent's level of understanding of his child's problem and himself. These items can become the jumping-off place for professional and parent to begin to understand the child, the parent, and each other.---(Mrs.) Ruth Danks, Administrator, Child Development Center, Easter Seal Society of Milwaukee County.

accept your child's limitations without blame or resentment. However, seek understanding and do not resign yourself, or his future, to these limitations.

build up his confidence. He has a lesser, but still very important, potential to develop and contribute to life. Show him that you, too, have this confidence in spite of the fact that our world places much emphasis on mental facility.

cooperate with, rather than reject, special recommendations and programs advised by professionals who have studied your child's individual needs. (It is difficult for all of us to be objective when one of our own is involved.)

direct his attention. Often the slow child appears to be less attentive and may require help in guiding concentration. If you recognize this problem, perhaps a little extra effort on you part could bring about improved listening, understanding and response. One suggest method is:

> Ask your child to come to you. Touch him lightly yet firmly (on shoulder, under child or take hand). Ask him to look directly at you. Explain that you are going to say something important. Add that you will expect him to repeat (statement), or to describe (action) when you finish. If this should be difficult for him at first, some patient prompting should help to establish habit.

expect him to require more than the usual amount of time for almost everything (such as dressing, eating, chores and homework). Not only is he more easily distracted, but physical slowness - including a possible lack of muscular coordination - will often accompany mental slowness. Make allowance for this extra time. Establish that tasks should be carried through to completion.

forget about unfair comparisons of school progress with that of children of friends, relatives, and neighbors and, likewise, of brothers and sisters. The slow child runs his own track and at his own speed. He cannot be pushed until he is ready and able to pull. As an individual, he deserves to be treated as such and allowed to develop at his own rate and pattern.

govern his discipline at home by that which is expected from his siblings. Permissiveness, through misguided sympathy, is not a kindess. It will cause him to be resented by his peers now, as well as cause him to be resented toward you later when he must cope with rules of normal adult society. Be <u>consistent</u> in whatever disciplinary means you find most effective.

help him to take pride in doing those things he can do well. Find his own special talents and give genuine praise for effort and accomplishment in order that he experience success.

institute a regular normal program of outside activities and cultural opportunity or any extracurricular learning experiences, as a means of broadening his horizon. Don't deny him these by saying, "Oh, why brother-he won't get enough out of it anyway." Suggested social experiences include church, Sunday School, museums, libraries, concerts, plays, sports, scouts, 4-H club, YMCA groups, summer camps, family vacations, community excursions, and a visit to observe farm or city living. If such opportunities are employed suitabily, and in moderation, your child will be apt to surprise you. He could learn even more than you, and in a very different way. He is far more dependent upon various sensory perceptions and they serve him well on many such occasions. For instance, it's possible for a retarded child to describe a nature adventure by means of sight, smells, and sounds that we had missed completely.

Johnny usually can learn to read; also to do basic arithmetic, writing, and spelling - the four great essentials. True, the method may need to be examined and altered. or even to be tailor-made to fit. Your school will be glad to make recommendations for special help in academic areas if you will ask how you can help.

Keep directions simple. The slow child does not assimilate as readily or remember as easily. Chain commands are apt to be confusing; both you and the child will be angry and frustrated at his failure to carry out the instructions. We've all been guilty of giving hurried, breathless directions like this: "Stop whatever you're doing, because I want you to run upstairs to the bedroom and look in the top drawer of the tall chest and find my light blue thread and don't forget the door behind you and watch the stairs, too, but hurry because you can see that I'm waiting."

Let the child set the pace in new learning situations at home. Watch carefully and constantly for signs of interest in a new undertaking and his first attempts to experiment. This is your clue to proceed quietly and promptly. Lend guidance to establishing certain limits as the activity may indicate, such as appropriate area and time, materials needed, proper use of tools, safetly measures, personal strength, health and endurance. This should give him courage and confidence in new undertakings.

Make certain that you stand ready to help him to solve his problems, but don't provide every answer. Mother but don't smother. To varying degrees he'll need nudges, reminders, gentle guidance, and perhaps some step-by-step organization of action or materials. Even in extreme situations try not to drop the last pieces of the jigsaw puzzle into place, thus diminishing his pride in task solution and completion.

Never give up hope for possible progress by wearily throwing in your sodden sponge. Give it (and your child) an extra squeeze, remembering that slower children don't always show the same level of ability in all branches of learning. In school, as well as at home, accomplishment in some subject areas forges ahead while in others it lags behind, possibly never leveling up. (Are you equally capable in mathematics, science, history, literature, and foreign languages?)

Open every possible door to his development and progress by finding, investigating and considering all available persons and places specifically geared to aid your particular child. Often they cannot come to you; you must go to them.

Patience and perserverance are recognized as personal attributes necessary to all parents. For guiding and training the slow learner these are even more important keynotes to improved harmony in the daily relationship. Positive or negative application of these atributes can result in observable changes. This child often has a shorter attention span and frequently a shorter retention span as well. Useful three R's for emphasizing in the home are repetition, retracing and review, particulary when there has been some distraction or interruption in daily routine (as visitors, illness, and school absence). Great patience and perserverance are called for in establishing and maintaining general rapport.

quiet child? Beware! Such children may be calling out for help by their very silence. Don't assume that they are simply "good". Consider emotional problems, speech difficulties, and visual and auditory defects. (The regular physical check-ups should include ears and eyes.) Disabilities such as these can cause withdrawal from active participation and competition. However, at the other extreme, don't hover over your child watching for nonexistent defects when perhaps he is simply enjoying the child's private world we adults cannot penetrate. You'll need wisdom to know the difference!

request and read available material concerning your child's particular problems. Many experts, and agencies as well, stand ready to help you to gain new knowledge and understanding, via the printed word, in the comfort of your own home. Face up to facts - a child and his future may be dependent upon the parents' ability and willingness to read, react and resolve.

Social acceptance is highly important to the slow learner's welfare outside the home situation. Without it he may well be shunned, belittled, ridiculed, dominated and even exploited. Good training on your part in regards to proper dress, health and hygiene, cleanliness and neatness, politeness and good manners, and general conduct in public surely will aid in bringing about acceptance. Any child, barring the lower custodial types, is capable of learning with your encouragement. Thus the child will gain confidence in relationship to self and society. And, you'll be proud of him, too!

teaching at home, whenever possible, should be concrete rather than abstract; deal in specifics and not in generalities. These are prime importance for your slow-learner's best possible comprehension. Again, a reminder that he relies less on mental images and more on his senses, especially sight (visual patterns), touch (manipulation of objects), and auditory clues. Encourage his questions; ask questions of him. Guide him toward vocal and motoric expressions based on new learning experiences.

Understanding the importance that a familiar routine plays in the slower child's life. This is another facet of the constant repetitions he requires. Try to keep the main daily events as constant and consistant as your home schedule will allow. While you may be bored, remember that he likes to do most things at the same time, in the same place, and in the same way. Just knowing what to expect, when to expect it, where it will happen, and how to proceed gives this child a remendous sence of needed security. For him, at least, monotony can breed content! To provide variety within this framework can be a real challenge to your ingenuity!

Verbalize as little as possible or, to put it simply, don't talk to much. Your child's verbal comprehension is slower and an excess of words is bound to result in mental confusion. Regardless of the type, or the importance of the conversation involved, he eventually "tunes us out". Meanwhile, we drone on much like an abandoned radio or TV!

Children learn to listen in many different ways to use both the eyes and ears in so doing. Examples include nonverbal direction (gestures only); sparse use of words but clues from facial expression, eye movements, or nods of head; and the actual pure auditory means whereby we "talk to the back of his head." Try this last with an inattentive child from time to time. Stand behind him and say,"I want you to listen to me now with just your ears - no 'peeking' allowed" Note any improved ability to really concentrate without the availability of visual clues.

Watch your language - meaning your choice of words. Try, without actually "talking down" to him, to choose alternate words and phrases he will be able to understand more readily. Little by little, add others; his vocabulary will increase gradually and soon he will realize that certain terms mean the same thing. Do the same with words with opposite meanings. When there is a fairly good foundation in synonyms and antonyms, begin to help him to make comparisons and to see relationships. Also, encourage your child to tell you a story, or to simply "talk about" any subject of his own choosing. Development of language skills will be a most useful tool to progress in all academic subjects.

X-ray your own state of mind. Let the light penetrate the darker corners. Then determine whether your attitudes, conscious or unconscious, might be further handicapping your child in his daily relationships, at school, in the neighborhood, and even within the family. Resolve once again to pray for insight to see beyond his outward behavior to his inner feelings.

You find that the slow child presents an ever-challenging personal problem to you as a parent. Whatever the hardships involved on your part, he is "affectionatly yours". He has love to give if only you will accept it and return it in kind. You were chosen, among many others, as one able to provide the special thought and care that your child requires and deserves. Be adequate to that task in every way possible so that you may enjoy shared growth and progress, as well as understanding.

Zest for life and living must not be denied your slow learner. He, like all other human beings, wants and needs to "feel good about himself." Help him to realize that in our vast and complex world there is a need and a place for each of us. And of course, YOU must believe in this yourself!

& we can't forget the ampersand, nor the quotation from the well-known author, Pearl S. Buck, who has experienced this problem first hand:

> "The test, I say again and again, of any civilization is the measure of consideration and care which it gives to its weakest members."

As a lifeling resident of LaGrange, Ill., Mrs. Frey has been foster parent of a dozen state and county wards with varying handicaps (physical, mental and emotional). She has done graduate work in special education at the University of Illinois and has had a six-year association with the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., School for Exceptional Children, Palos Park, Ill., which she describes as an invaluable experience from the viewpoint of the child at school.

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Written in response to the demand from parents and teachers who work daily with these "difficult" children. Dr. Cruikshank describes the psychological and learning problems of the brain-injured child, recommends certain diagnostic procedures, suggests materials and activities at home and at school, and discusses techniques for handling the child. He concludes with a look at the future, the problems remaining to be solved and the prospects for solving them.

Caring for Your Disabled Child. Benjamin Spock, M.D., and Marion O. Lerrigo, Ph.D. The MacMillan Company. 1965. 373 pp. $4.95. (Collier-MacMillan Paperback, $1.95)

To help parents cope with the many problems of raising a handicapped child, Drs. Spock and Lerrigo discuss the psychological, physical, educational, social, vocational, and sexual implications of the disabled child. Parents will find this sensible book a dependable reference in caring for their handicapped child.

Everyday Problems and the Child With Learning Difficulties. Bebe Bernstein. John Day Company. 1967. 163 pp. $4.95.

Written for parents and teachers of children with learning difficulties due to mental disability, social handicaps, or emotional disturbance who want help in focusing their training efforts on specific daily living problems. The author has set up 38 everyday problems, outlining materials and directions for helping the child to solve the problems.

Guiding the Retarded Child: An Approach to a Total Educational Program. Bernice B. Baumgartner. John Day Company. 1965. 241 pp. $6.95

This is written for special education teachers of the mentally retarded for administrators and superivors and for parents of retarded children. It is a comprehensive, grass roots approach, arising from the author's 20 years of experience working toward establishing and improving educational programs for the retarded.

Helping the Brain-Injured Child: A Handbook for Parents. New York Association for Brain Injured Children. 1962. 158pp. $3.50.

A sensible, useful manual for parents of children with serious perceptual, conceptual, and/or behavior problems, many of whom are also retarded. It has a good list of educational activities to do at home for reading, writing, arithmetic, sensory training, conceptualizing, communication, and manual skills.

How to Help Your Handicapped Child. Samuel M. Wishik. Public Affairs Committee Pamphlet, No. 219. 1958. 28 pp. 25 cents.

Considers the many implications of the presence of a handicap for a child and his family with special emphasis on the effects on the child's personality and practical suggestions for what parents can do.

If Your Child Is Handicapped. William C. Kvaracues and E. Nelson Hayes (Editors). Porter Sargent Publisher. 1969. 413 pp. $7.95

A collection of personal accounts by parents which reveal the various forces at work on families of handicapped children. Includes selections written by parents of the retarded, the cerebral palsied, the orthopedically handicapped, the deaf, the blind, and the emotionally disturbed.

The Mentally Retarded Child at Home. Laura L. Dittmann. Children's Bureau Publication No. 374. U.S. Government Printing Office. 1964 99 pp. 35 cents.

Offers practical information about day-to-day care of retarded youngsters, and adds insights into growth and development of retarded children. A good aid for management of problems in the home.

The Other Child--The Brain-Injured Child. Richard S. Lewis with Alfred A. Strauss and Laura E. Lehtinen. Grune and Stratton, Inc. 2nd edition. 1960. 3rd printing. 1966. 148 pp. $3.75

A book for parents and laymen, using familiar terminology. Parents and others are generally more familiar with the type of brain injury that causes motor disturbances than with the type that results in disturbance in perception, concept formation, language, and emotional behavior. This book is for parents of brain-injured children with emotional behavior, some of whom may also be mentally defective.

Physical Activities for the Mentally Retarded: Ideas for Instruction. Project on Recreation and Fitness for the Mentally Retarded, American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. 1968. 137 pp. $2.00

A collection of activities according to levels from the very low, with suggestions for basic movement patterns, developing self-awareness, etc., to the more complex organized games and sports. Designed for use by physical education instructors, teachers and parents. Contains a selected bibliography.

A Program of Art Activities for the Young Retarded Child at Home. Dorothy G. Tucker and Barbara Jeanne Seabury. Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, Division of Mental Retardation, Publication No. 589. 1966. 69 pp. (Mimeographed) Single copy free.

Activities are presented in a sequence intended to encourage independence, provide an acceptable outlet for emotions and stimulate development. Those are enjoyable art activities for the child and the parent.

The Retarded Child. Nancy W. Faber. Crown Publishers, Inc. 1968. 308 pp. $5.95

Recommended for all parents. Mrs. Faber toured the world, visiting various day and residential programs for the retarded, which she compares with facilities in the United States.

The Shadow Children: A Book About Children's Learning Disorders. Gareth Ellingson. Topaz Books. 1967. 254 pp. $6.50

The author has translated professional literature into a book for parents and teachers. It deals with the problems of identification and education of the child with minimal learning disorders, one who cannot function comfortably in the normal world, yet who generally does not present a severe enough problem to receive special treatment or education. Mrs. Ellingson is dyslexic herself and speaks with personal understanding. The book includes a director of public and private agencies that provide testing, diagnostic, and educational services.

Social Security: What It Means for the Parents of a Mentally Retarded Child. 1968. 6 pp. (Single copy of the booklet is available free of charge from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Social Security Administration.)

It explains who is eligible for benefits, how to apply, the amount of the benefits, and to whom they are paid.

Teaching the Retarded Child to Talk. Julia S. Molloy. John Day Company. 1962. 125 pp. $3.50

This book is of particular value for working with dependent mentally retarded children. A section is devoted to mongoloids. Parents will be encouraged by the numerous suggestions for things they can do.

Toys....The Tools of Children. June Frantzen. National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults. 1957. 16 pp. $1.00

An old but useful publication, still available. A guide for selection of toys to suit the various developmental stages.

When a Child is Different: A Basic Guide for Parents and Friends of Mentally Retarded Children. Maria Egg, M.D. John Day Company. 1964. 155 pp. $3.75.

This is a "how to do it" book, which has proven helpful to many parents.

Where's Hannah? A Handbook for Parents and Teachers of Children With Learning Disorders. Jane Hart and Beverly Jones. Hart Publishing Company, Inc. 1968. 256 pp. $8.50.

This is an account by a parent of a child with learning disorders, retarded in development but not actually mentally deficient. Hannah is hyperactive and distractible; she perseverates and shows many of the behavior manifestations of her problem. Society, seeing the outer behavior and not understanding, disapproves. Hannah's parents analyze her behavior, define each task she must accomplish, and figure out a way to help her complete it. They have put professional theory into practice with a great degree of success. Foreword by Ray H. Barsch states his belief in the teaching potential of parents.

You and Your Retarded Child: A Manual for Parents of Retarded Children. Samuel A. Kirk, Merle B. Karnes, and Winifred D. Kirk. Pacific Books. 1968. 164 pp. $4.50. (Paper back, $1.50)

A practical, clearly written manual of value to parents and teachers. A "how to manage" book, with an interesting proposal for a community center for the retarded.

You can Raise Your Handicapped Child. Evelyn West Ayrault. G.P. Putman's Sons. 1964. 318 pp. $5.95.

This book's chapters on mental retardation, parent attitudes, and practical suggestions can be helpful. It is especially good on the causes of retardation, ways of handling one's own feelings and the child's in solving day-to-day problems. Preface by Margaret Mead. Appendices of State Laws, association, and clinics.

Your Nonlearning Child---His World of Upside-Down. Bert Kruger Smith. Beacon Press. 1968. 175 pp. $4.95.

The baffling qualities of the child with learning disabilities and the reactions of parents and teachers to them are described and discussed. The whole spectrum of learning disabilities is examined. One chapter contains sources of help--places and persons.

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In the library there is also a pamphlet listing the agencies and organizations concerned with exceptional children. We also have a directory that includes all sources in the United States of help for the learning disabled child including Special Education Directors, Legislative Sources and Early Childhood Agencies. It is listed by state so it might be of some interest to you.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS **********

A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading. Nancy Larrick, Pocket Books, New York, 1972. 304 pp. $1.25 (paperback)

Between Parent and Child. Dr. Haim G. Ginott, Avon Publishers, 1965. 243 pp. $1.25 (paperback)

Baby Learning Through Baby Play. A Parent's Guide for the First Two Years. Ira J. Gordon. St.Martin's Press. 1970

Common Sense in Child Raising: A Special Education Approach. Edward J. Kelly, Love Publishing Company, Colorado. 1971, 131 pp.

Creative Opportunities for the Retarded Child at Home and in School.

Booklet 1: Getting Started
Booklet 2: Finger Painting and Simple Print Marking
Booklet 3: Drawing and Painting
Booklet 4: Clay and Other Dimensional Media
Booklet 5: Stitchery
Booklet 6: Wood Working and Odds and Ends

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How To Parent. Fitzhugh Dodson, Signet Book, New American Library, 1970. 1440 pp. $1.25 (paperback)

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Sibling Rivalry. Everett Ostrovsky. Cornerstone Library, New York. 1970.

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Teach Your Child To Talk: A Parent Handbook. Staff of Developmental Language and Speech Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan, CEB Co./Standard Publishing. 1970. 163 pp.

The Exceptional Parent: A Practical Guidance for Parents of Exceptional Children. Psy-Ed Corp. 264 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. 08116. 1971. $1.00 per six issues.

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MANAGEMENT OF THE FAMILY OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED. Wolf Wolfensberger, Ph.D. and Richard A. Kurtz. Follett Educational Corporation. 1969. 542 pp. $12.50.

A large and interesting collection of articles written about parents and siblings of the retarded, including some written by parents themselves. The book is intended for those in any discipline who are concerned with the family that has a retarded member. Every stage of family experience is considered.

SOCIAL SERVICES TO THE MENTALLY RETARDED. Helen L. Beck. Charles C. Thomas, 1969. 224 pp. $8.75.

Written primarily for social workers, but offeres helpful information to parents in a style of writing that is non-technical and straightforward. The author discusses the nature of the problem, the contribution of social services to alleviate the problem, and concludes with an interesting discussion of the future, specific concerns of parents and social workers.

THE PARENT OF THE HANDICAPPED CHILD. Ray H. Barsch. Charles C. Thomas 1968. 456 pp. $11.50.

This is a study of child-rearing practices of 177 families with handicapped children. A readable piece of research for parents and professionals. Subjects include:

SIBLING ATTITUDES
PATTERNS OF DISCIPLINE
ATTITUDES OF NEIGHBORS, RELATIVES, ETC.
TOILET TRAINING
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